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NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 AID-20 RSR-01
/094 W

R 021038Z OCT 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0652
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL DANANG
CINCPAC
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izgur DATE 1/26/82
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
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PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 15780

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: COMMENTS FROM THE GENERALS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

1. (U) THE SEPT 24 ISSUE OF DIEU HAU ("HAWK") MAGAZINE CARRIES A TWO-PAGE, ILLUSTRATED FEATURE ENTITLED "POINTS OF VIEW OF GENERALS AT THE FRONT." INCLUDED IN THE ARTICLE ARE BRIEF COMMENTS BY 13 GENERALS ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION. THE QUESTION THEY WERE ASKED AND THE CIRCUMSTANCE IN WHICH IT WAS ASKED ARE NOT STATED. HOWEVER, THE ARTICLE IS OF SOME INTEREST SINCE DIEU HAU HAS CLOSE, IF INFORMAL CONNECTIONS WITH THE RVNAF POLWAR DIRECTORATE AND SINCE THESE ARE AMONG THE FEW COMMENTS ON THE RECORD BY THE GENERALS ABOUT THE ELECTION.

2. (U) TRANSLATIONS OF THE GENERALS' REMARKS AS CARRIED BELOW THEIR PHOTOGRAPHS FOLLOW:

(A) GENERAL CAO VAN VIEN, CHIEF OF THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF: "IN THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART, I TRULY WISH THAT GENERALS THIEU AND KY WOULD JOIN TOGETHER."

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Authority NND 969078
By NARA Date 12/2/01

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(B) LT. GENERAL NGO QUANG TRUONG, MR IV COMMANDER:
"I'M SORRY THAT THERE IS ONLY A SINGLE SLATE LEFT IN THE ELECTION."

(C) LT. GENERAL PHAM QUOC THUAN, COMMANDANT OF THE THU DUC INFANTRY SCHOOL AND A FORMER COMMANDER OF THE 5TH DIVISION: "IN ORDER TO SUCCESSFULLY AVOID DANGEROUS DISSENSION AND DISCORD, MILITARY MEN MUST SET THE INTERESTS OF THE ARMED SERVICES AND THE NATION ABOVE PERSONAL INTERESTS. AND ABOVE ALL, GENERALS MUST SET AN EXAMPLE. AFTER THE BATTLE OF SNUOL, I LONGED TO BE ABLE TO RETURN TO MY OLD DIVISION TO RESTORE ITS FIGHTING SPIRIT AND THE OLD APPEARANCE OF THE MEN."

(D) LT. GENERAL HOANG XUAN LAM, MR I COMMANDER:
"THE GENERALS SHOULD MAKE CONCESSIONS, LIVE IN HARMONY WITH EACH OTHER, AND LEAVE THEIR MEN FREE TO MAKE WAR."

(E) VICE ADMIRAL TRAN VAN CHON, NAVY COMMANDER:
"THE STAND OF CANDIDATE AND PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU IS THE STAND OF THE ARMED FORCES."

(F) BRIG. GENERAL TRAN VAN HAI, 44TH SPECIAL TACTICAL ZONE COMMANDER: "THE PATRIOTISM OF TRAN VAN HUONG IS BOUNDLESS."

(G) BRIG. GENERAL VO VANH CANH, 23RD DIVISION COMMANDER: "THE ELECTION ON OCT 3 WILL TURN OUT WELL IN MY AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. I HAVE NO OPINION ABOUT POLITICAL PROBLEMS."

(H) BRIG. GENERAL TRAN BA DI, 9TH DIVISION COMMANDER:
"THE DISSENSION BETWEEN GENERALS THIEU AND KY CONTINUES:
'CIVILIAN POLITICS' WILL DISREGARD US."

(I) MAJOR GENERAL LE NGOC TRIE, 22ND DIVISION COMMANDER:
"FOUR NOES, FIVE NOES, OR SEVEN NOES...IF THEY'RE AGAINST COMMUNISM AND THEN THEY'RE ALL IN ACCORD WITH THE STAND OF THE MILITARY."

(J) MAJOR GENERAL PHAM VAN PHU, 1ST DIVISION COMMANDER:
"THOSE WHO BROUGHT ABOUT THE VICTORY IN LOWER LAOS ALL RETURNED FROM THERE WITH GRATITUDE FOR PATRIOT TRAN VAN HUONG."

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(K) BRIG. GENERAL NGUYEN KHOA NAM, 7TH DIVISION COMMANDER: "DISSENSION AMONG THE LEADING GENERALS DOES NOT HAVE ANY EFFECT ON THE FIGHTING SPIRIT OF THE MEN (?)" (NOTE: QUESTION MARK ADDED BY DIEU HAU.)

(L) LT. GENERAL NGUYEN XUAN THINH, 25TH DIVISION COMMANDER: "THE FOUR NOES STAND OF PRESIDENT THIEU IS IN ACCORD WITH THE ANTI-COMMUNIST STAND OF THE MILITARY AND THE PEOPLE OF VIET-NAM. THEREFORE, I WHOLEHEARTEDLY SUPPORT IT. IF ONE NO IN THE FOUR NOES BECOMES A YES, THEN SOUTH VIET-NAM WILL FALL AND TURN RED. MY VIEWPOINT, IN ADDITION TO BEING THE VIEWPOINT OF A GENERAL, IS ALSO THAT OF A CITIZEN WHO HAS FOUGHT THE COMMUNISTS FOR MANY YEARS."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 15780

(M) LT. GENERAL NGO DZU, MR II COMMANDER: "THE DISSENSION AMONG THE NATIONALIST SHOULD BE RECONCILED BY FINE AND AMICABLE SETTLEMENTS. A COUP AT THIS TIME WOULD ONLY BENEFIT THE COMMUNISTS."

3. (C) COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THESE COMMENTS CAN NOT OF COURSE BE TAKEN AS CAST IRON EVIDENCE OF THE GENERALS' ATTITUDES, THEY ARE AMONG THE MORE REVEALING INDICATIONS WE HAVE SEEN TO DATE. THE VIEWPOINTS EXPRESSED CAN BE ROUGHLY DIVIDED INTO THREE GROUPS:

(A) UNRESTRAINED SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT THIEU'S "FOUR NOES" POLICY AND THE OCT 3 ONE-MAN ELECTION: ADMIRAL CHON, GENERALS CANH, TRIEN, AND THINH.

(B) NON-PARTISAN STATEMENTS URGING AN END TO DISSENSION AMONG MILITARY LEADERS OF CLAIMING THAT SUCH DISSENSION DOES NOT AFFECT THE WAR EFFORT: GENERALS VIEN, THUAN, LAM, DZU, NAM, AND DI. VIEN, LAM, AND DZU ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE MADE EFFORTS TO REMAIN IN FRIENDLY CONTACT WITH THE THIEU AND KY CAMPS. THUAN IS A LONG-TIME FRIEND OF PRESIDENT THIEU. HIS

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PUBLIC REFERENCE TO THE POOR CONDITION OF THE 5TH DIVISION AFTER SNUOL (MAY 1971) IS NOTEWORTHY. NAM AND DI, WHO ARE "YOUNGER BROTHERS" IN THE HIERARCHY OF GENERALS, HAVE CHOSEN TO DOWNPLAY THE THIEU-KY FEUD.

(C) STATEMENTS WHICH MAY BE DISGUISED CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT THIEU: TRUONG'S RATHER ENIGMATIC STATEMENT COMES IN THE WAKE OF REPORTS THAT HE HAS BEEN CHAFING AT ADMINISTRATION PRESSURES TO BECOME MORE POLITICALLY ACTIVE IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT. GENERAL HAI'S PRAISE OF TRAN VAN HUONG AND OMISSION OF PRESIDENT THIEU MAY NOT BE ACCIDENTIAL. HAI IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN DISPLEASED BY HIS SUDDEN REMOVAL AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONAL POLICE AND TRANSFER TO THE 44TH SPECIAL TACTICAL ZONE IN JANUARY 1971. THE REASON WHY PHU ALSO CHOSE TO SINGLE OUT TRAN VAN HUONG IS NOT KNOWN.
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